“Life’s a Trip”

Posted on

From celebrity faces to abstracts, the dazzling and quirky pop art world, imagined by American artist Giovanni Sticco, will come to life at the Lionel Wendt on 15 and 16 November 2023 under Life’s a Trip.

Words Jennifer Paldano Goonewardane.



The thinking man, 2021.

Life’s a Trip explores the witty and uncanny world of pop art. At times, it’s serious as much as comical. There is something immensely unconventional that begs attention and defies the familiar aesthetics associated with traditional art forms. In that, it makes it relevant and appealing to the masses and is stripped of the snootiness related to the styles of the master painters.

Some even call it a rebellion against the norm, making pop art the exceptional form that explores symbols of popular culture, from mundane objects to celebrities, an artistic imagination that swings between some mystifying and curious faces, figures, objects, and comic characters that it passes off as some kind of activism. But for Giovanni, it’s pure passion. Nothing in his life or about his life goes on canvas. Instead, his pop art articulates his imagination and the influence of his surroundings, but more so, his love for movies and old Hollywood.

In Giovanni’s work, the influence of three key men is evident – Andy Warhol – a big name in American pop art; Haitian American painter Jean-Michel Basquiat, and Picasso, an amalgamation of the old and the new, the classical and the popular. Giovanni, like his influencers in the pop art tradition, embraces the liberalism afforded by the images and objects of a materialistic popular culture.



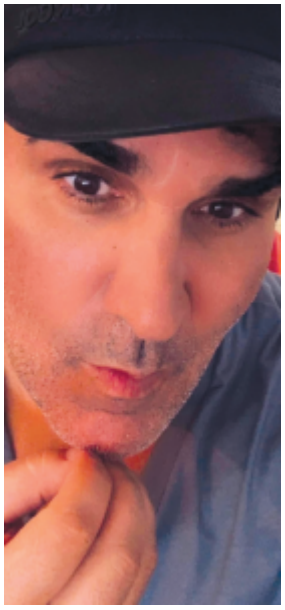
Macy and the ice cream dreams

Giovanni’s art is diverse. They embody the same mayhem and fuddle familiar with pop art. Still, there is something immensely light-hearted in their presentation, people-centric, youthful, and rejuvenating expressions, especially as a window to his love for the movies and old Hollywood. They are repetitive in some instances and bring to the fore what pop art is most known for – the centrality of symbols of commercial culture. Thus, Giovanni’s famous faces combine objects of popular culture and reveal the artist’s imagination. At the same time, some are abstractions with people, things, and indistinct imagery, leaving the viewer with an enigmatic representation. They manifest everything he is fond of, using his prowess to pay tribute to the people he admires. The son of rock n’ roll singer Johnny Stark, Giovanni was born and raised in Hollywood, California. His love for art didn’t begin with the canvas but with the camera, where he explored the limitless universe of filmdom, having worked as a film producer, director, and writer dealing with sci-fi, horror, and dramatic films. Hence, he didn’t take to painting until much later, about eight years ago, due to his involvement in the movie industry.

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His love for art as a young boy was also heavily influenced and encouraged by his elementary school art teacher, Mr Tommy Appleby, whom Giovanni spoke of with great admiration, the man who influenced his sense of awareness, photography, and artwork.

Today, as he continues to work on films while painting and pouring out his imagination into the dazzling field of pop art, he confesses that his work springs from a deep love for art that overrides the commercial appetite that drives most projects.


Giovanni Sticco.

Life’s a Trip will showcase thirty-four paintings and prints, along with decorated pots, all of which will be sold or auctioned. Included in the exhibits will be his father’s jumpsuits from the 1970s.

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Meanwhile, Giovanni is currently involved in four movie projects scheduled for filming in Sri Lanka, one of which will be a documentary on his father titled “I am Johnny Stark”. His earlier credits include The Encounter (2011), Resurrection, and Cemetery of Lust (2012).

November 15; 12pm–5pm

November 16; 12pm–7pm

At Lionel Wendt Art Centre, Colombo 7

instagram.com/giovanni_ hollywood2008/



A woman by the window, 2023



The pots – Blast from the past (left) and Intergalactic (right).



Eyes – represent a kid with four glasses.


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Knock
Knock

Life is a circus, 2022.